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Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4079

S E C R E T LISBON 5105

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, PO
SUBJ: ANGOLAN REFUGEES

REF: LISBON 5079

1. I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH THE EFFORTS YOU AND YOUR STAFF HAVE MADE IN SUPPORT OF U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO THE AIRLIFT. I AM ALSO GENERALLY AWARE OF THE DIFFICULT BUREAUCRATIC STRUGGLES THAT WENT INTO THE DECISION, AND I HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO EXPRESS MY VIEWS IN A GENERAL MESSAGE FOR FEAR OF UPSETTING THE APPLE CART.

2. I CAN LIVE WITH THE TWO AIRPLANES. THE MESSAGE HAS BEEN DELIVERED TO COSTA GOMES AND WE ARE NOW OFF THE HOOK IN WASHINGTON AND HERE WITH THE PRESS. BUT I THINK WE ARE PASSING UP A BIG POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY BY NOT GOING LARGER. I AM NOT SURE I HAVE SUFFICIENTLY CONVEYED TO WASHINGTON THE POLITICAL FORCE THESE REFUGEES WILL REPRESENT IN LISBON (REFTEL), AND I TODAY INSTRUCTED MY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SECTIONS TO WORK ON A JOINT MESSAGE TO THIS EFFECT.

3. JUST LOOKING AT IT SUPERFICIALLY, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING AN ADDITIONAL 200,000 STRONG ANTI-COMMUNISTS INTO THE LISBON METROPOLITAN AREA, WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF 1,700,000. LISBON ITSELF, WHERE MOST OF THEM ARE, HAS A
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POPULATION OF 800,000. SOME WILL OF COURSE GO NORTH, BUT

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IT DOESN'T HURT TO HAVE MORE ANTI-COMMUNISTS THERE. IN THE
EVENT OF A DIRECT CONFRONTATION, THE SO CALLED "MODERATES"
WILL BE LOOKING FOR ALL THE SUPPORT THEY CAN GET, AND THESE
PEOPLE WILL CERTAINLY BE ON THEIR SIDE. THEY ARE ALSO
BEGINNING TO MOBILIZE THEMSELVES. EVEN IF THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS
LOSE THIS ROUND. THE REFUGEES WILL REPRESENT A CONTINUED
SOURCE OF VERY REAL PRESSURE ON A PRO-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT,
PARTICULARY HERE IN LISBON. I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS WITH MY
STATION CHIEF AND HE AGREES FULLY.

4. WE ARE PASSING UP THIS OPPORTUNITY IN THE HOPE THAT
TWO INSTEAD OF A LARGER NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT, WILL SOMEHOW GIVE
US LEVERAGE ON COSTA GOMES. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW THIS
IS TO WORK. AT THIS POINT, A POLITICAL DYNAMIC IS UNDERWAY
AND THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT WE SEND WILL NOT MOVE COSTA GOMES
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. HE IS DISAPPOINTED IN OUR RESPONSE, BUT
ACCEPTS IT. HE TOO CAN LIVE WITH TWO AIRCRAFT, PARTICULARLY
IF HE GETS SOVIET AID (ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS FACE A PAINFUL
DILEMMA ON THIS ONE). HE HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED THAT HE
IS RELATIVELY IMPERVIOUS TO PRESSURE FROM US, I HAVE SOMEWHAT
RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDED WE NEED TO SHIFT FROM STRATEGY FO TRYING TO
MANEUVER COSTA GOMES, WHO IS BASCIALLY UNMANEUVERABLE, TO
A STRATEGY OF BUILDING UP ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES, MILITANT AND
OTHERWISE, JUST AS FAST AS WE CAN. A BIGGER AIRLIFT WOULD DO
JUST THAT.

5. IF WE GO BIGGER I CONTINUE TO FAVOR THE USE OF HIGHLY
VISIBLE MILITARY AIRCRAFT.
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